United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement on Friday, says UNITA has accepted national reconciliation proposals put forward at Angola peace talks; urges parties to reach comprehensive agreement before UNAVEM II mandate expires on 30 September.

+ Secretary-General begins working visit to Japan; meets former Government officials and receives report on reform of United Nations.

+ Bosnian Serbs halt shelling of Bihac after UNPROFOR Commander warns of possible NATO action; situation in Sarajevo said to be very tense.

+ NPFL faction detains 43 military observers in Liberia; large amount of equipment and vehicles seized.

+ Population and Development Conference concludes negotiations on reproductive rights chapter in draft programme of action.

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The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has formally accepted all the proposals on national reconciliation put forward in the Lusaka peace talks, according to the Security Council. In a statement read out by President Juan Antonio Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) on Friday, the Council said UNITA had conveyed its acceptance in a letter to the Secretary-General's Special Representative on 5 September.

The Council stated that by accepting the proposals, UNITA had met the requirements set out in resolution 932 (1994). As a result, it would not add the measures -- trade sanctions and travel restrictions -- indicated in resolution 864 (1993) to the existing oil and arms embargo against UNITA.

The Council urged UNITA and the Angolan Government to reach a comprehensive agreement within the framework of the "Acordos de Paz" and relevant resolutions before the current mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) expired on 30 September. It reiterated that it would reconsider the United Nations role in Angola if a peace agreement

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were not concluded. The Council also reiterated its demand that the parties cease all offensive actions.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday began a working visit to Japan, having concluded his official visit to India. Shortly after arriving in Tokyo, he had private meetings with a range of officials, including former Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and former Foreign Minister Koji Kakizawa.

Today, the Secretary-General had talks with former Prime Ministers Yasuhiro Nakasone, Tsutomu Hata and Morihiro Hosokawa. The Japan Economic Research Institute also presented him with a report on United Nations reform.

Addressing a luncheon hosted by the United Nations Association of Japan, the Secretary-General said democratization of the United Nations would be well served by giving the country a permanent seat on the Security Council. He stressed that Japan would not be obliged to contribute troops to peace-keeping operations, as such contributions were purely voluntary for all Member States. Peace-keeping accounted for less than one third of United Nations activities, and Japan would have no difficulty finding ways to contribute in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres.

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Bosnian Serb forces halted their shelling of Bihac yesterday after the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lieutenant-General Michael Rose, warned that further attacks on the safe area could lead to action by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, Bosnian Government forces continued to fire mortars out of the pocket, and UNPROFOR was worried that the Bosnian Serbs would retaliate, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Force Commander of UNPROFOR, General Bertrand de Lapresle, met with the parties over the weekend with a view to reducing tension and urged a halt to military activity in the pocket.

Meanwhile, the situation in Sarajevo was very tense after Bosnian Serb forces fired a mortar round in violation of the exclusion zone around the city. There was also moderate shelling near Tuzla. The spokesman noted a considerable increase in the number of unauthorized helicopter flights in the area, in violation of the no-fly zone. An anti-tank round was fired at the hotel housing the head of the European Union administration in Mostar yesterday, although he was not in his room at the time. Croatian President Franjo Tudjman promised to assist the investigation into the incident, which appeared to be a deliberate attack.

The spokesman went on to say that three British UNPROFOR soldiers had been killed, and five wounded, outside Gorazde today when their armoured personnel carrier rolled into a ravine. The incident was described as a

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traffic accident, and was not the result of an attack on the vehicle.

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Forty-three military observers have been detained by a faction of National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), a United Nations spokesman announced today. He said a large amount of equipment and vehicles had also been seized. The observers were being held in different locations and some were in difficult circumstances, although none had been injured or harmed.

The spokesman went on to say that the general situation in Liberia was difficult; fighting was continuing across the country and there had been no progress towards disarmament. Peace talks in Ghana which had been suspended last week resumed today, he noted.

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At the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo today, negotiations were concluded on the chapter of the draft programme of action dealing with reproductive rights and reproductive health. Ambassador Nicolas Beekman of the Netherlands said that the essential unanimity which had existed when the text was being drafted in New York had been preserved. Despite a semblance of divergency, the nations of the world saw population and development issues -- including family planning -- in much the same way, he added.

On Friday, Rwandan representative Patrick Mazimhaka said the situation in his country was not the result of demographic pressure but of political manipulation of the population. He stated that the genocide there could be seen as "yet another attempt to manipulate demographics to serve political ends." Rwanda now must embark on development policies that would promote population stabilization.

Several African countries with serious health care problems and high fertility rates spoke of their experiences with population issues. High infant and maternal mortality rates were cited as primary factors in attempting to form population policies. Speakers also stressed the need for help from the international community in implementing those policies.

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